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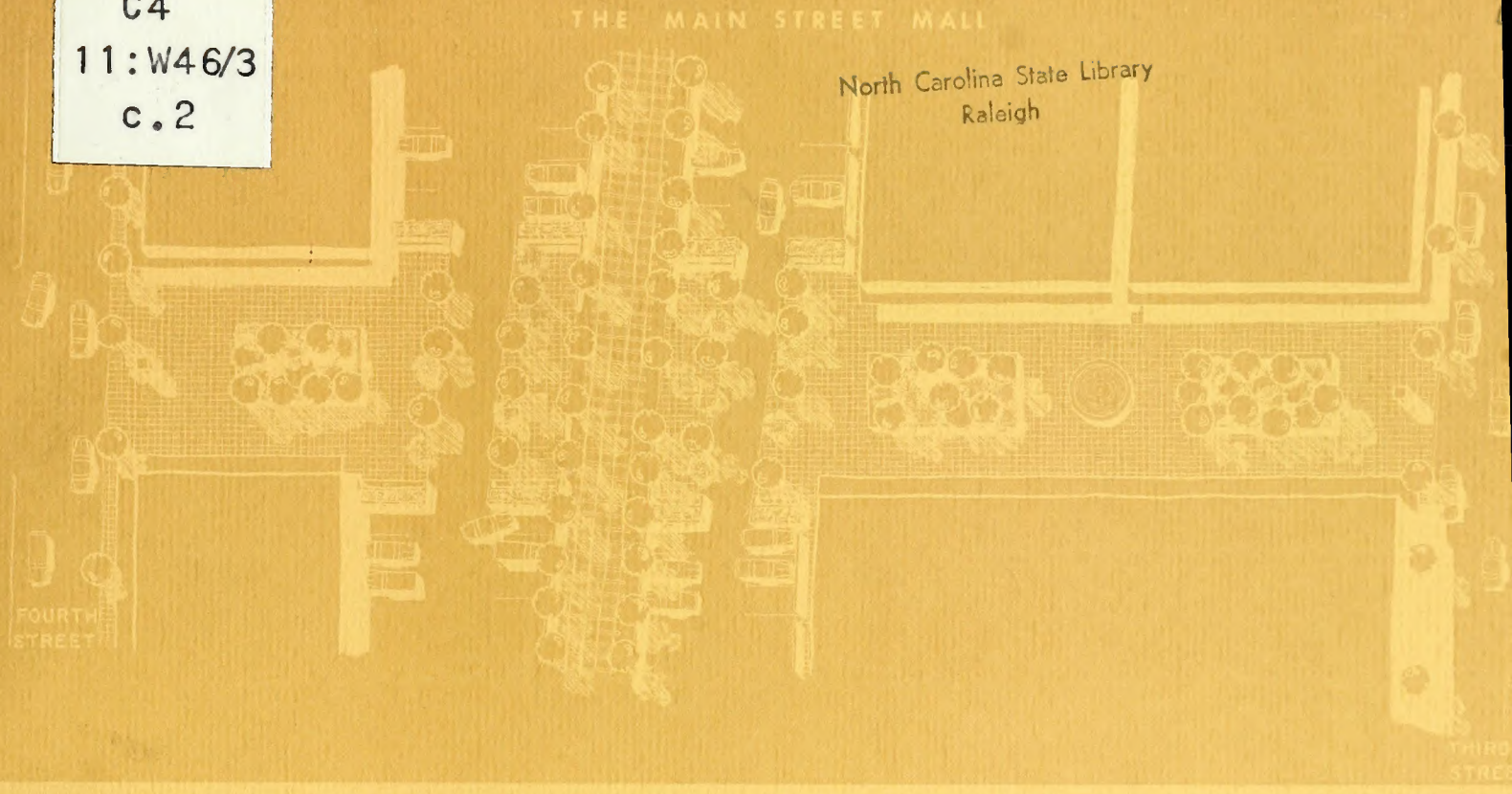

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CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLAN

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WENDELL, NORTH CAROLINA

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLAN

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Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Urban Planning Assistance Program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

In October of 1964, the Town of Wendell contracted with the North Carolina State Department of Conservation and Development, Division of Community Planning for professional assistance in the preparation of a Preliminary Design Plan for the Central Business District. Prior to that time, the Town Planning and Zoning Boards have completed, with the technical assistance from professional planners, other planning projects for the comprehensive program in Wendell. These include Base Mapping, Land Use Survey and Analysis, Population and Economic Studies, Sketch Thoroughfare Plans, Future Land Development Plan, Subdivision Regulations, and a Zoning Ordinance for the Town.

The Planning and Zoning Boards of Wendell, during the past year, have spent much time and effort in formulating desirable objectives in the revitalization of the downtown core as well as making many specific and valuable suggestions regarding the improvement and development of the Wendell Central Business District. The Boards have taken two opinion surveys in the retail trade area of Wendell. One was a questionnaire for the local merchants and the other was with the consumers. The Boards have also conducted several meetings to which the public was specifically invited to view films and slides on central business district planning programs and projects, as well as applying the existing local conditions to the realm of future possible alternatives for Wendell.

This study is the last of the series of planning reports prepared for the Town of Wendell as a part of the comprehensive planning program. The other studies prepared have been concerned with the development problems of the entire town and urbanizing area, while this one is dealing with the problems and opportunities of a specific area, that of the downtown core or central business district. This plan has been prepared using as a guide the major thoroughfare plan and land development plan for the community as they were adopted. The plan has been formulated and evolved from public participation by encouraging

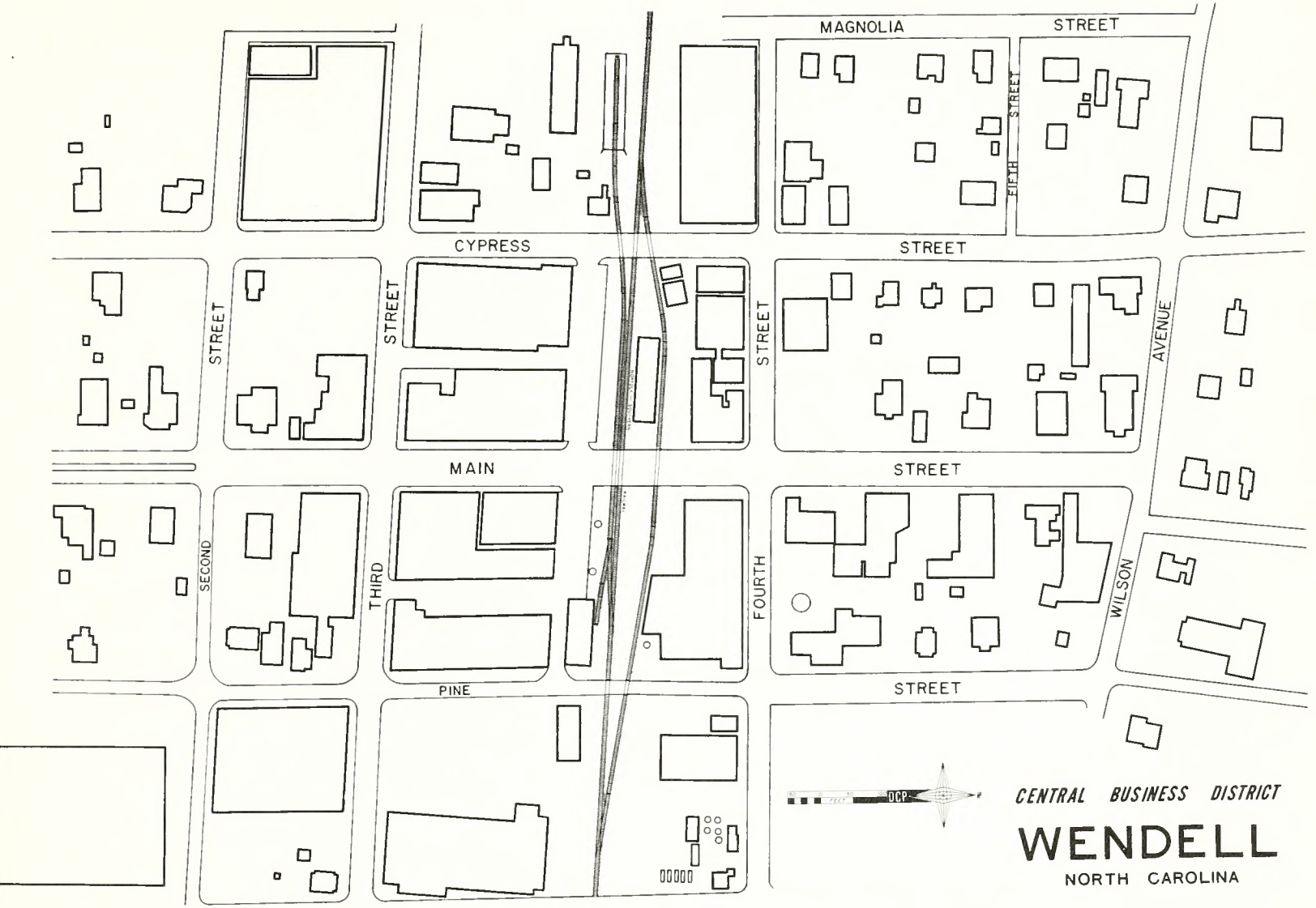
the Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations, downtown merchants, and interested citizens to attend meetings and enter into the decision making processes.

The purpose of the study is to delineate specific problems of the central business district and suggest recommendations to help in solving these problems by improving existing conditions and adding a new vitality to the downtown core shopping area. This will attract new people, while the existing customers will be retained and not lost to other modernized town centers or any shopping centers. Each person should come more often and spend more time and more money if the aesthetic environment of the Wendell Central Business District is improved and the shopper's convenience and comfort is increased while in downtown Wendell.

The advanced technology of this changing era has provided convenient transportation by automobile and improved highways. The result of this progress is less travel time between distances and the possibility of a choice of more favorable alternatives. This has been an important influence on the living patterns of the entire population. However, it has conversely been detrimental to the economic health and physical growth of the many central business districts in the towns and villages near extensively developed urban centers.

The residents of the smaller urban areas and rural families are increasingly being given the choice of different and favorable shopping places by travelling. As a result, the smaller communities with antiquated central business districts are increasingly losing their trade and income to the contemporary regional and community shopping centers.

These new shopping centers have abundant free parking spaces, convenient access, new buildings, covered sidewalks, air-conditioned areas, pedestrian malls, clean restrooms, resting places, night lighting, background music, controlled signs, good restaurants,


MAGNOLIA
STREET
FIFTH
STREET
CYPRESS
STREET
STREET
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AVENUE
MAIN
STREET
SECOND
THIRD
FOURTH
WILSON
PINE
STREET
DCP
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
WENDELL
NORTH CAROLINA

integrated landscaping, and coordinated design and furniture all providing an atmosphere conducive to enjoyable buying in a pleasant market place environment.

Most central business districts are the products of many years in the past at a time when there was no automobile. Therefore, if the existing streets had been wider and more open space left for off street parking lots, there would not be as many critical problems facing the vitality of the institution of the downtown central business district. It might be concluded rather logically from this reasoning that if a central business district plan had been prepared in the early days of the town all these unfortunate situations could have been averted. However, living and buying patterns have changed immeasurably within the past half century. The advent of the private automobile as a prime factor of transportation to and from work and shopping has had a profound effect on the economic and physical design of all central business districts. Ergo, the planning and improvements of any vital downtown must be a continuous process.

The threat of the economic vitality of the small town central business district is not a matter of location for the downtown as normally sited at or near the geographic center of the community. It is not a question of diversity either as the central business core has the majority of trade, services, professional, financial, and governmental activity of the community. It is also not a lack of investment as the downtown has the highest concentration of property values in the area.

The major problem of the central business district is that it is obsolete in terms of design. It has not kept pace with changing patterns of public, cultural, or buying attitudes and traffic circulation. It has become old with little or no attention given to the renewal, rehabilitation, design, and planning of the new and inviting image of the downtown central business district of the urban community.

L A N D U S E

An inventory of existing land uses and activities is utilized to aid in analyzing the structures and spaces in the downtown shopping area. This informative data was taken by survey and recorded on the land use map. Different categories were used to identify the various land use classification within the central business district.

The uses within the central business district of Wendell were appropriately grouped as primary retail trade, consumer services, social and cultural, professional and offices, wholesale and storage, industrial, residential, automotive services, vacant buildings and vehicular parking.

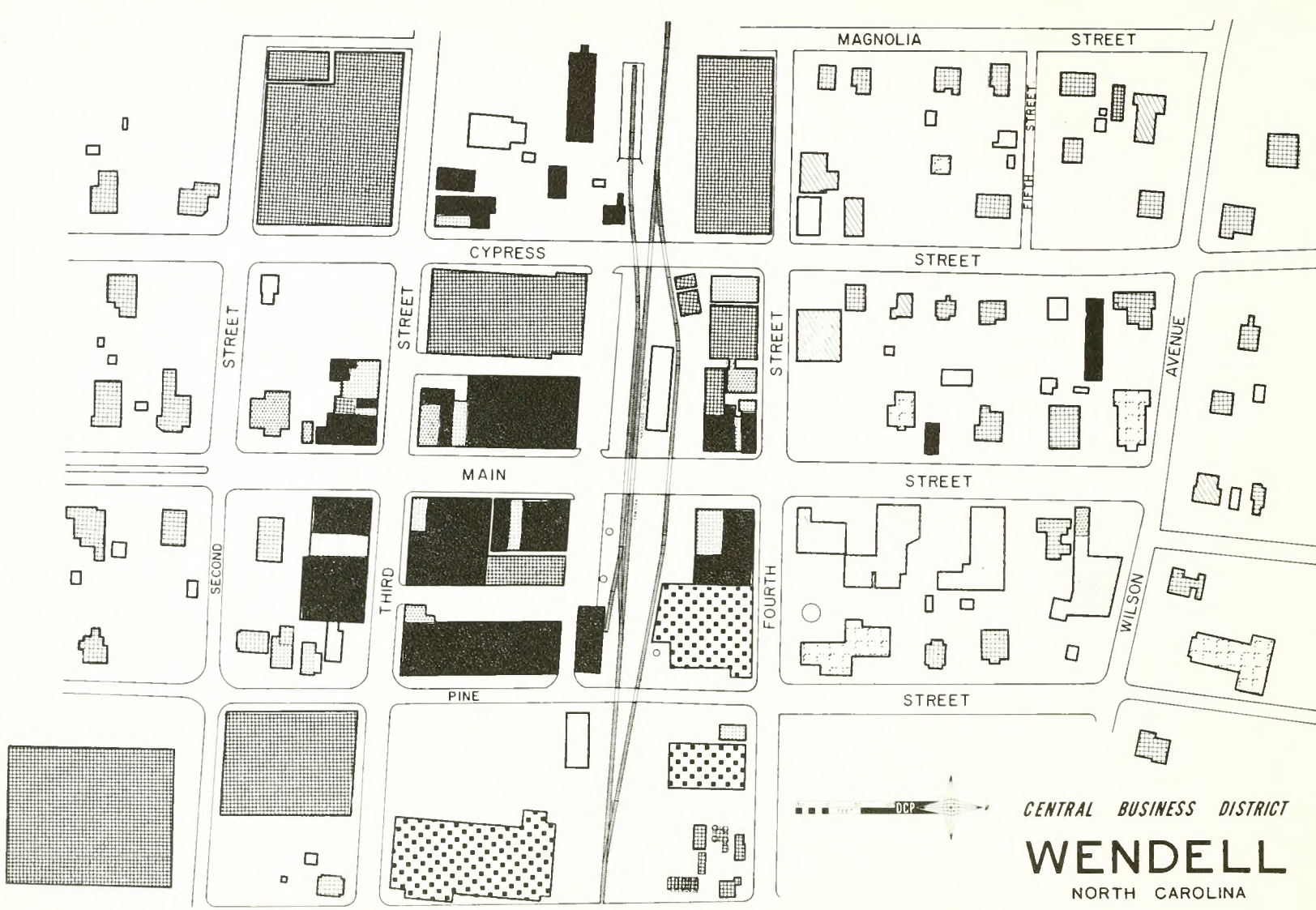
Primary and secondary retail trade stores are clustered about Main Street and Third Street. These and similar establishments are dependent upon the pedestrian shopper traffic for supplying potential customers.

Consumer services provide personal services such as restaurants, barber shops, beauty shops, and other similar uses. These uses are normally dependent upon convenient pedestrian access.

Social and cultural uses within the downtown core include the town hall, churches, library and civic clubs. These desirable functions of the community help to create the image of the center of the downtown.

Professional and office uses are also vitally important to the central business district and its financial activities. These include administrative offices, medical, dental, legal, financial, relators and other professional services.

Wholesale and storage uses occupy a gross amount of space in the central business district and somewhat conflict with the major function of the downtown as a shopping center. These are the large tobacco warehouses on the fringe of the shopping district.



EXISTING LAND USE

WHOLESALE | RETAIL | INDUSTRIAL | AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES | CONSUMER SERVICES

SOCIAL & CULTURAL | PROFESSIONAL & OFFICES | RESIDENTIAL | VACANT

Industrial land uses are the manufacturing and industrial services. These are desirable and necessary uses in the community but would be more beneficially located beyond the central business district.

Residential uses include single family homes and multiple family units. Most of these are well maintained within the areas adjacent to the shopping core of the central business district. Eventually, as they deteriorate they should be replaced with commercial uses to expand the commercial area.

Automotive services include the car dealers sales and service garages on upper Main Street. These uses are centralized and require direct vehicular access.

Vacant buildings are defined for this purpose as those unoccupied structures not at that time devoted to any use. This was computed on a square footage factor of floor space area. At the time of the survey, only one office in the town appeared to be vacant.

Parking for vehicles was figured for number of spaces and square footages both on street and off street. The totals are usable for the downtown circulation analysis.

WENDELL CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

EXISTING USES OF BUILDINGS
SHOWN IN SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR SPACE

Primary Retail Trade	90,700	Square Feet
Consumer Services	16,700	Square Feet
Social & Cultural	16,700	Square Feet
Professional & Offices	11,800	Square Feet
Wholesale & Storage	197,400	Square Feet
Industrial	49,800	Square Feet
Residential	15,400	Square Feet
Automotive Services	53,200	Square Feet
Vacant Buildings	9,800	Square Feet
Parking Areas	67,200	Square Feet
TOTAL:	528,700	Square Feet

TRADE AREA

Economic and population characteristics are measurements of the growth and change of a town and community. The central business district of a town serves as the trade area for the entire community. A review of the population and economic study and the land development plan are important elements in the future improvement of the central business district. The economic stability and growth potential have an important bearing on the vitality of the urban downtown center and the surrounding trade area.

The Wendell Central Business District provides the commodities and services to the persons and families within the town limits and a large number of those living beyond in the fringe areas. These people come into the downtown to shop primarily for convenience goods, personal services, consumer durables, and other supplies. The trade area of the Wendell Central Business District is an irregular shaped circle of a several mile diameter.

The Wendell trade area is also part of a trade area of a larger city. This particularly applies for those people seeking a wider selection of shopping goods than are readily available in the Wendell shopping district. The city mentioned is Raleigh, the state capital of North Carolina and well within commuting distance of the Town of Wendell.

In fact, a portion of the residents of Wendell work in Raleigh at the present time and increasingly more may follow in the future.

This condition is a mixed blessing, as it permits a potential for suburban development that would not occur without this decentralized pattern of satellite town. Logical reason does imply, however, that much income is spent outside the Wendell Central Business District which might be kept at home if the downtown shopping complex of Wendell could offer favorable alternatives through a central business district improvement program.

The retail trade area of Wendell's Central Business District has been determined by the use of Reilly's Law of Gravitation. This is the mathematical method of computing and expressing the area from which most shoppers come. This is the premise that the people will trade in the place most accessible to them.

The 1960 census recorded 1,620 population within the town limits of Wendell. The estimated projection by the Division of Community Planning for the town within the planning period of the next twenty years is 2,250. This figure assumes an annexation policy similar to recent past years.

The average annual income per family in the Wendell area was $4,056 in 1960 while the per capita income was $1,083. There are an estimated 6,480 population in the trade area

with nearly five million dollars a year to spend. However, nearly one half of these families make under $3,000 per year, which by national standards is a poverty income. Families with a poverty level of income must spend virtually all of their money on such things as shelter, food and clothing. They have little "surplus" income for such specialty items as furniture, jewelry, appliances, etc. Thus, a CBD which is supported by a high percentage of poverty families is limited in the range of goods and services it can support.

E X I S T I N G C O N D I T I O N S

In Wendell, as in nearly every city and town in the state and nation, the problems and condition of the central business district are a matter of growing concern to the citizens and the community. The urban cores of the old towns were built for horse and foot travel and, consequently, are frequently inadequate for the automobile. Visually the older structures create a depressing appearance as many of them deteriorate from lack of maintenance and rehabilitation.

The economic vitality of the central business district is being siphoned off by the regional and community shopping centers in new suburban developments in the fringe areas. The omission of landscaping and competition of ugly signs reduce the quality of the environment to that of being barely tolerable. However, the average citizen often accepts this tasteless atmosphere as unavoidable in the downtown core.

Wendell is neither much better nor worse than most other typical towns in terms of the existing condition of the central business district. The physical appearance is mediocre and bland but not quite obnoxious enough for the average citizen to protest. The shoppers typically become accustomed to their environment to a point where they oppose and resist any change to it. However, beneficial or pathetic change is enevitable and constant in any living physical environment.

Wendell has a few deteriorating and dilapidated commercial and warehouse structures in the central business district which have outlived their economic usefulness. There are unsightly overhead wires and poles along the downtown streets. There is little or no landscaping in the downtown core to soften the intensity of the business oriented land uses. The rear of stores are littered with trash and many in a deplorable state of disrepair.

The cracked and broken sidewalks and stepped curbing are definitely a safety hazard to the pedestrian shoppers.

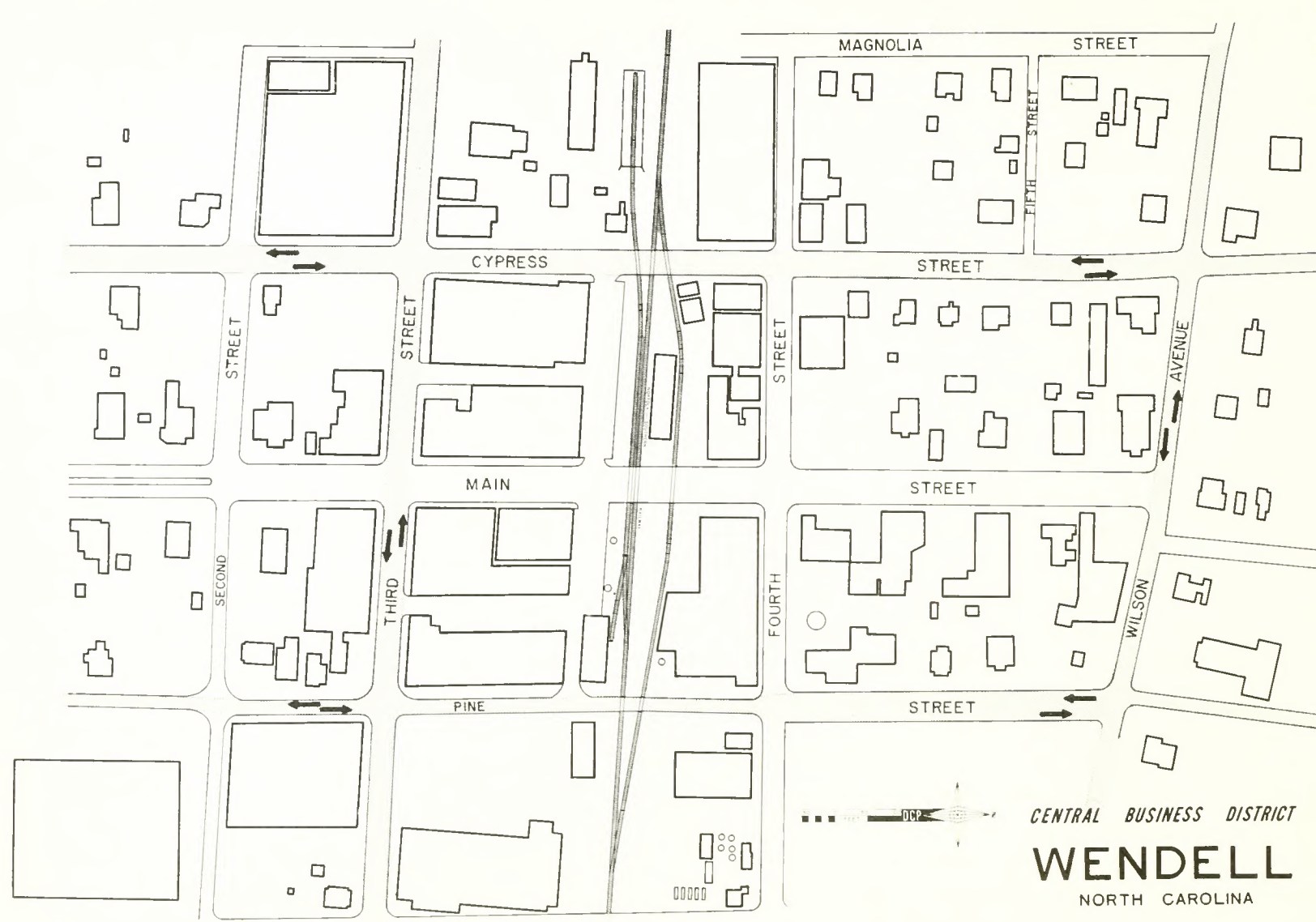
The advertising signs are utter chaos and conflicting due to their lack of design, unity of size, shape, and colors. The exteriors and interiors of many of the downtown buildings no longer meet the criteria for inviting and functional space. Some of the fringe area to the central business district along the railroad tracks is in a needless state of poor maintenance.

The majority of downtown buildings are sound and in fair or good structural condition. However, many need new roofs, adequate electrical wiring, plumbing fixtures, clean storefronts, painting and general repairs. There are dilapidated and obsolete buildings that should be torn down and replaced with better uses for the central business district. Some of the downtown streets are narrow and should be widened according to the thoroughfare and circulation needs. Much of the off street parking is relatively unorganized and detracting for the shops.

There are some extremely encouraging indications obvious in the analysis of the inventory of the land use and observations of existing conditions in the Wendell Central Business District. Several downtown merchants are not complacent in their attitudes about the central business district. They have either made improvements in their stores or are anxious to begin to do so on a coordinated basis. The trend is indeed one which will ultimately benefit the community and the downtown core immeasurably if this is done on a cooperative and coordinated approach.

The existing condition which provides the greatest opportunity for improvement of the central business district into a delightful environment is the spacial arrangement of the structures in the downtown core. The majority of the building masses are in an orderly concentration of rows and well sited. This makes possible an exceptionally clear proposal of redesigning the circulation of the vehicular traffic. This is an unusual benefit

possessed by few urban cores. Another gift is the open space provided by the railroad tracks and property bisecting the central business district. The tracks are somewhat of a liability in themselves, but, since train traffic is slow and infrequent, the benefits should outweigh the objections. There is also enough undeveloped land on the edge of the central business district to provide desirable future off street parking lot spaces close to the core.



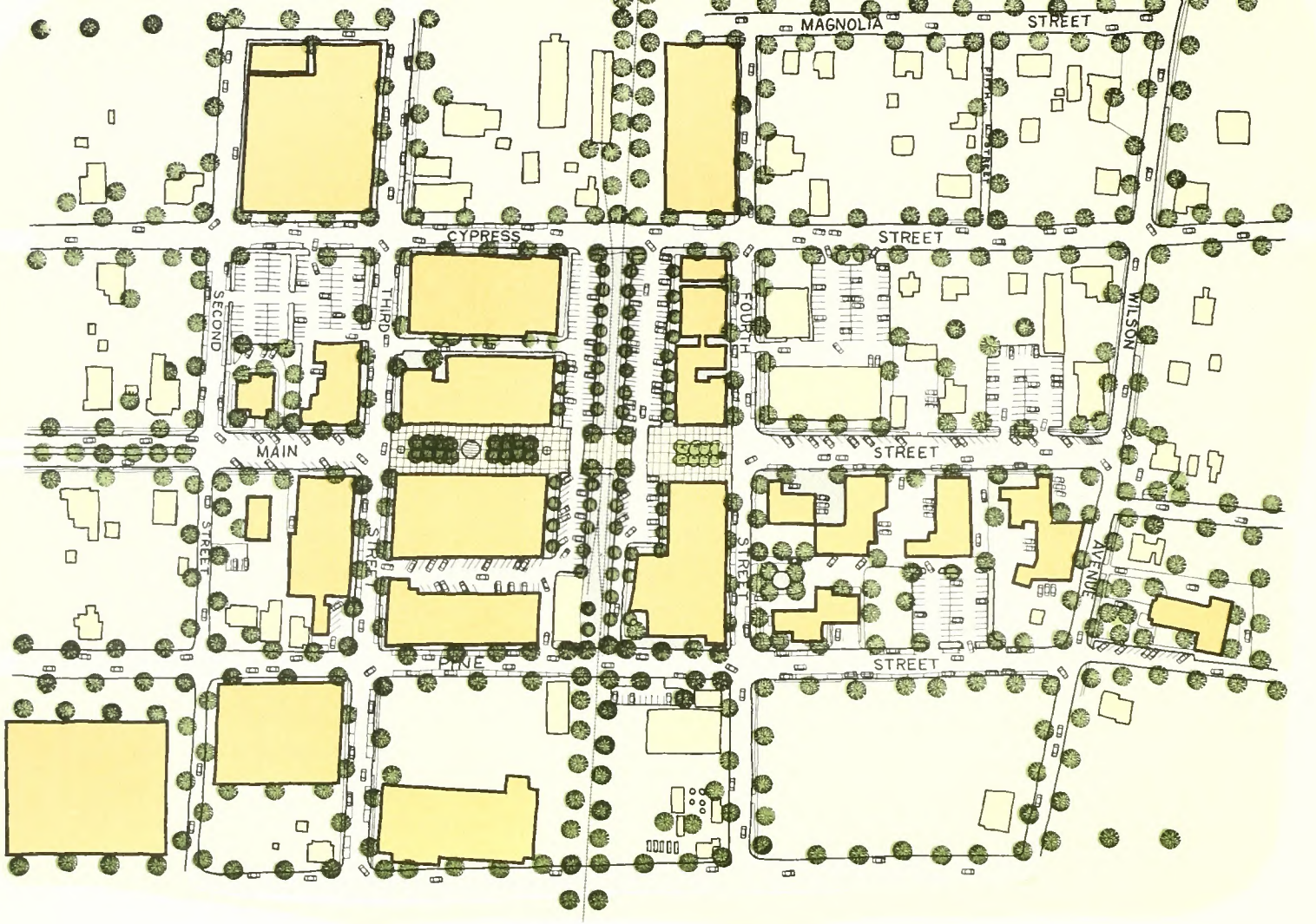
DOWNTOWN VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

C I R C U L A T I O N

The traffic patterns and vehicular congestion has been studied and reflected in the thoroughfare plan as adopted by the governing body of the Town of Wendell and the State Highway Commission. Average daily volumes and off and on street parking spaces have also been considered in the existing conditions of the downtown shopping core and the future needs of the central business district in the preliminary design plan. Circulation in the central business district plan includes through traffic, downtown access, convenient parking, and pedestrian safety as well as loading service for the stores.

Main Street is not a major route or traffic carrier nor designated as such on the adopted Wendell thoroughfare plan. It has no real vehicular circulation function in the central business district except for providing a very few on street parking spaces. Conversely, Pine and Cypress Streets, on the east and west, carry through traffic in the north and south directions and to the central business district. Third Street and Wilson Avenue are also on the adopted thoroughfare plan as major routes in and out of town and the downtown shopping core. This condition results in the very desirable situation that vehicle and pedestrian conflict and congestion can easily be eliminated on Main Street and better organized in a downtown loop around the central business district. Major parking facilities could then be located on the railroad property and adjacent to the downtown loop system and allow Main Street to be used as a shopping street or pedestrian mall instead of for traffic congestion. The land uses and arrangement of the structures in Wendell is ideal for the shopping pedestrian mall concept.

The pattern of pedestrian circulation in the central business district is a vital factor in the design of the preliminary plan. The separation of the walking shopper from the automobile and traffic hazards is essential to the downtown if it is going to function as a community shopping center. The mall on Main Street is fed through pedestrian walkways



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLAN

WENDELL

NORTH CAROLINA

on the railroad property parking spaces and by Fourth Street on the north and Third Street on the south. Additional customers could enter through stores designed for the purpose of access to the pedestrial mall from other off-street parking lots at the rear of stores.

The preliminary design plan for the central business district provides for trucks bringing shipments of goods to stores and establishments in the shopping core. Primary access would be by the downtown loop system and then enter the service road or alley nearest their destination. Actually, this is the same in most all instances as is being done presently. There must be adequate room provided for the parking and unloading of these trucks at the rear of the shops as well as an emergency fire access route through the mall. Service and pedestrian conflict could be further reduced by limiting the hours of truck deliveries to early morning or late afternoon where pratical.

The pedestrian walkways in the mall, on the street sidewalks and in the automobile parking lots can be much more than routes of moving people from one area to another. Landscaping and points of interest can provide the pedestrian with many exciting experiences. The street furniture, items of art to focus upon and the paving materials are important to the total environment.

After the implementation of the shopping mall plan for the improvement of the central business district, it may be necessary to reevaluate the existing traffic control devices in the downtown core. Since new driving patterns and walking and parking habits will occur in the citizens shopping, signs and signals can then be adjusted.

T H E P L A N

The preliminary plan for the central business district must be a practical design based on the many physical, social, economic, and political requirements of the town and community. The design plan must be efficient as well as attractive for the citizens and shoppers who will continue to use the "new" downtown core. The preliminary plan shall use the qualitative and quanitative criteria of the statistical research and analysis as well as the objective goals of aesthetic environment.

The Wendell Central Business District plan is designed based on the needs during the next twenty year period. Therefore, it will not be required that all the final parts of the proposed plan be implemented in the first phases of the long range program. However, none of the recommendations can ever be successfully accomplished unless the plan is supported and goals used as guidelines for achievements.

The most difficult aspect of fully understanding the preliminary design plan is the comprehension of the dimension of time which is a necessary element in its implementation. The various physical aspects of the plan all have a definite interrelationship to the factor of time of effectuation. The proposed design plan for downtown is in several stages and phases each with a priority. Since the different parts of the plan will require varying amounts of time, money and effort to accomplish, their scheduling will need to be flexible but not basically altered. The phases of the design plan can be viewed in this perspective as immediate, future, and long range improvements in the total development of the central business district.

A delicate balance of coordination and timing must be attained for efficient accomplishment of the construction of the many improvements. A chart should be set up scheduling the project target dates and the defining of individual responsibilities to insure accomplishment of the plan.

OBJECTIVES

The enjoyment and comfort of citizens and shoppers is ultimately determined by the total urban design environment in which they move and exist. This feeling and experience is significantly enhanced by the physical improvement of conditions in the central business district. A tasteful and aestetically pleasing blend of townscape and landscape can be achieved by using the proposed recommendations for the future development of the downtown core in this preliminary plan. This will contribute to the image of a progressive town and community while at the same time improving the general social, physical, spiritual and economic vitality of the public.

It is necessary to formulate desirable guidelines for the improvement of the central business district of a community. Important objectives are the creative and continuous operation of a dynamic downtown core functioning as a center for activities of diverse functions and the economic hub of a community shopping center; the creation and provision of an efficient and safe traffic circulation loop system and adequate vehicular parking; and the creation of convenient pedestrian access systems to provide the shoppers a safe and pleasant passage from shop to shop and return to their transportation means. The accomplishment of these worthwhile objectives in the preliminary design plan and their subsequent implementation by the citizens and the merchants will not only attract people to shop in the center but will give each a share of pride in the community and its central business district.

UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

The removal of all overhead wiring and poles should proceed with haste as soon as possible to enable repaving of the pedestrian area and new sidewalks. Burying the wires should continue until all the wiring in the downtown area are of the underground type.

This would include the lines to the rear of the main buildings and in the parking areas as well as the streets. A tremendous improvement to the visual atmosphere will result and simplify the later projects of canopies, signs, and landscaping.

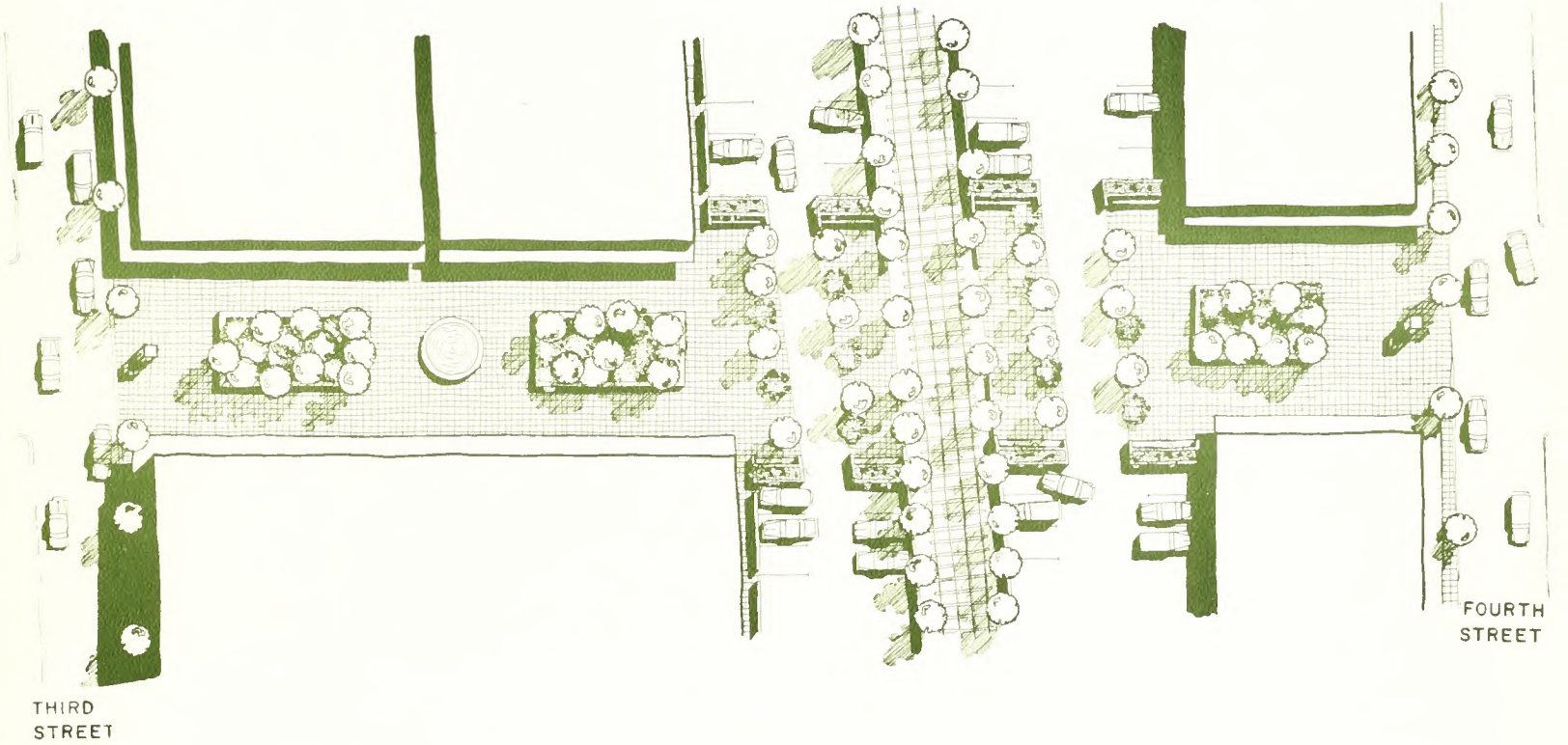
UNIFIED CANOPIES

Wendell has had two new and well designed canopies erected on an individual basis in the downtown area. The same materials and dimensions should be used on the rest of the installations to provide the desired unity and standards. Canopies supply shelter from the elements for the customers and at the same time give a feeling of indoors to the outdoors. Care must be exercised in the fabrication and hanging of the canopies regarding the scale and connection detailing where window heights vary. Canopies which run the entire length of the block provide the facades of the stores a sense of unity at the pedestrian level. The scale is more human to the shopper and cost benefits achieved through the volume of work involved resulting in financial savings to the merchant. The unified canopy system cannot be an individual matter. However, the contractor could innovate variety in the hanging or supporting columns and overhangs as conditions warrant without sacrificing unity by substituting other materials or colors. The finished product is the end result and must remain paramount in the minds of those concerned throughout the construction for the desired ultimate benefits.

BUILDING ELEVATIONS

The facades of the stores offer unlimited possibilities in the improvement of the central business district. However, here again the work must be coordinated for any beneficial result to occur. Qualified professionals should be consulted for the choice of colors, painting, signs, window displays, and facing materials. In many cases this step

THE MAIN STREET MALL



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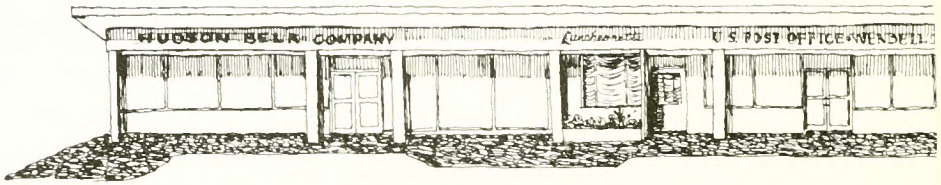
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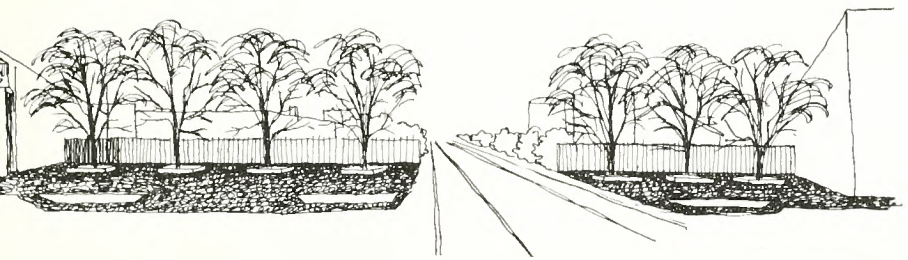
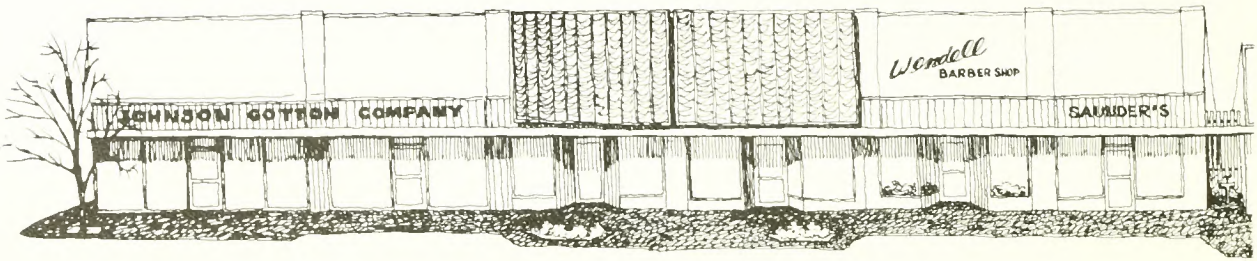
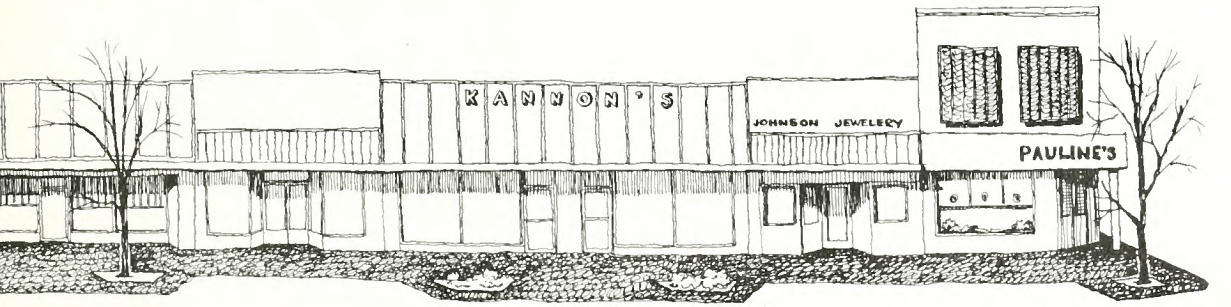


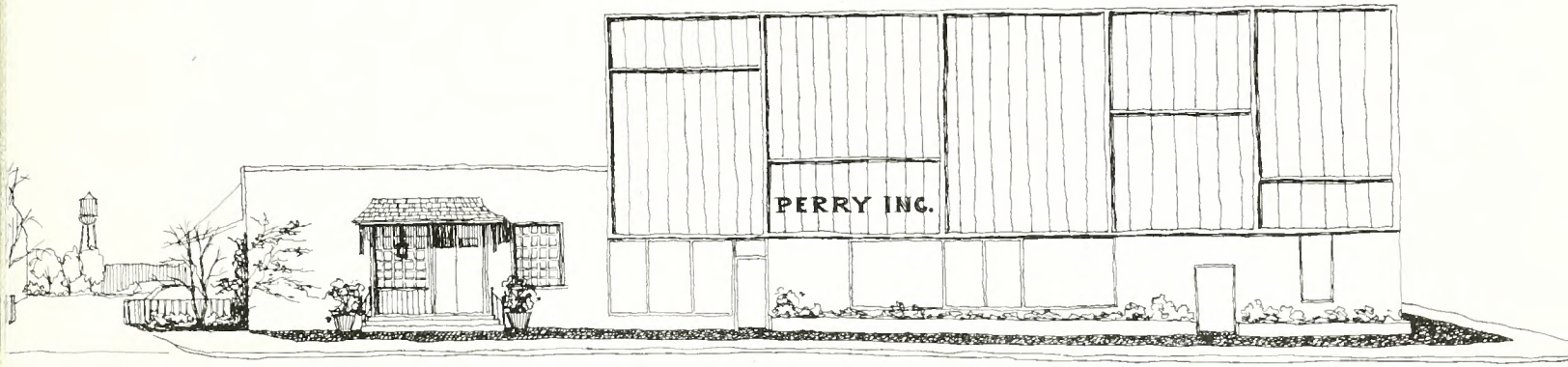

JOHNSON COTTON COMPANY
Wendell
BARBER SHOP
SAUNDER'S

KANNON'S

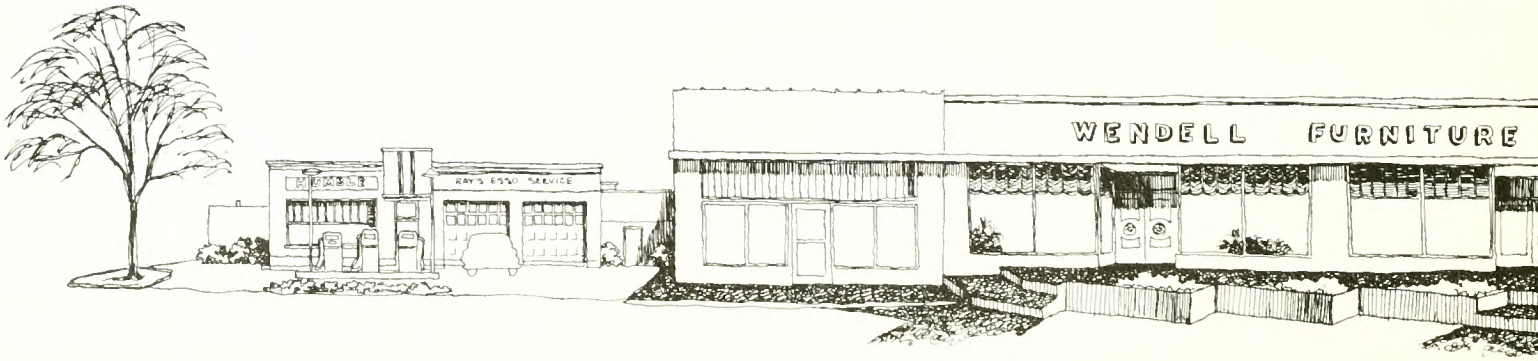

KANNON'S
JOHNSON JEWELERY
PAULINE'S

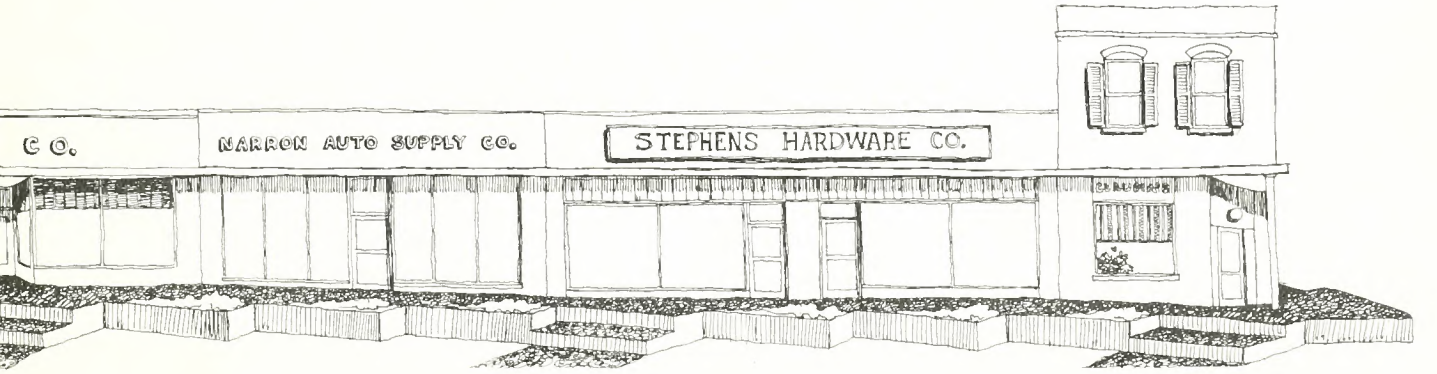
IGA
FOODLINER

IGA
FOOD STORE
PAULINE'S BEAUTY SHOP


PERRY INC.

Happy Motoring!
LUBRICATION
WASHING
WENDELL FURNITURE


RAY'S ESSO SERVICE
WENDELL FURNITURE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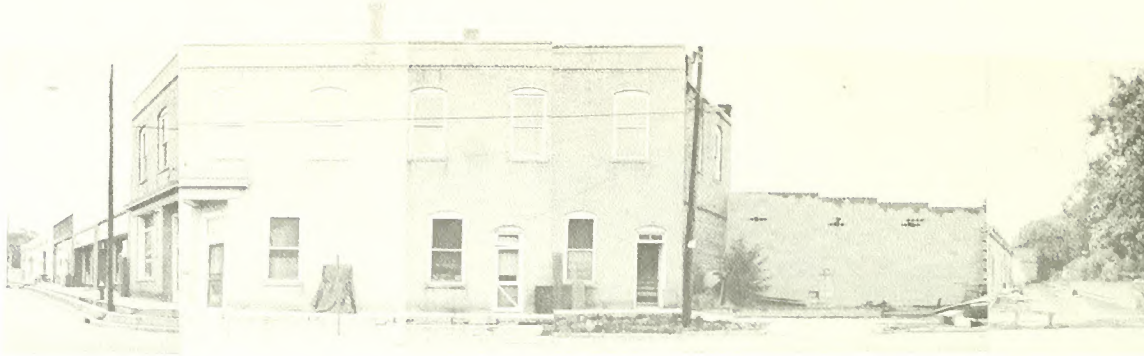
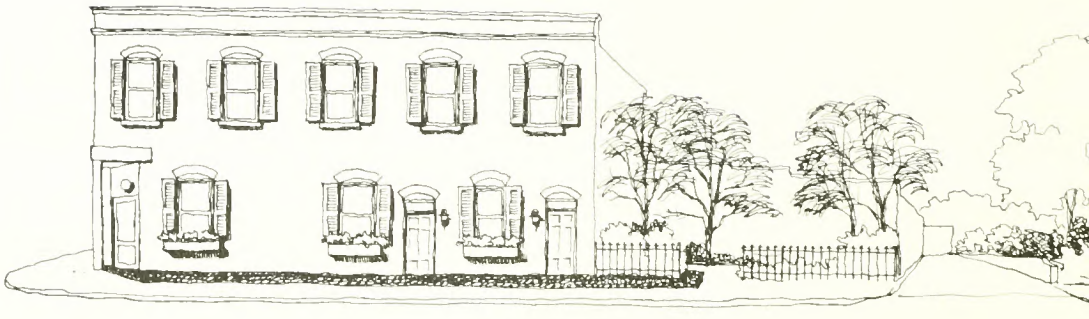
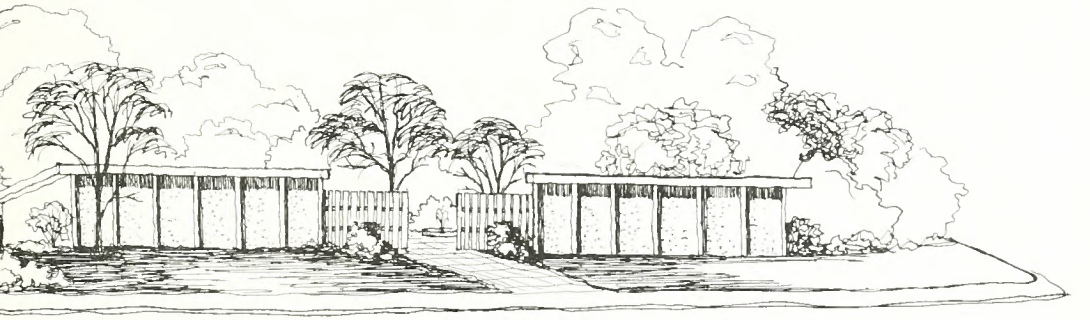
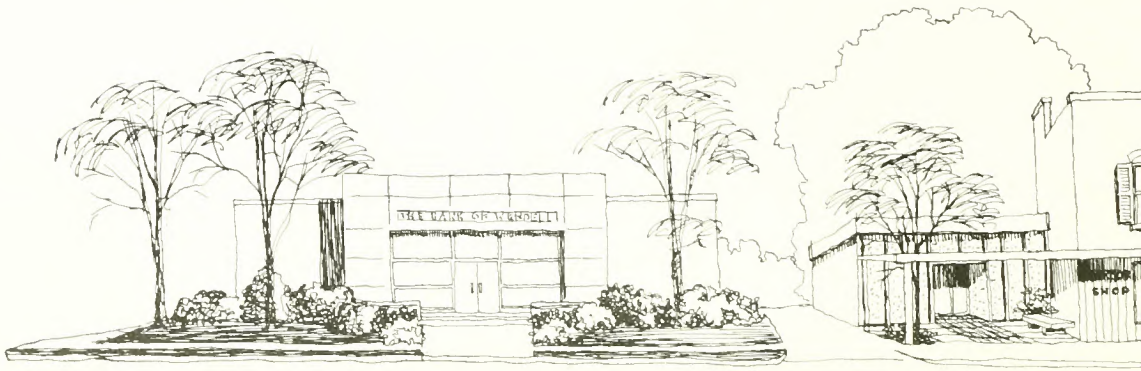
STEPHENS HARDWARE CO.

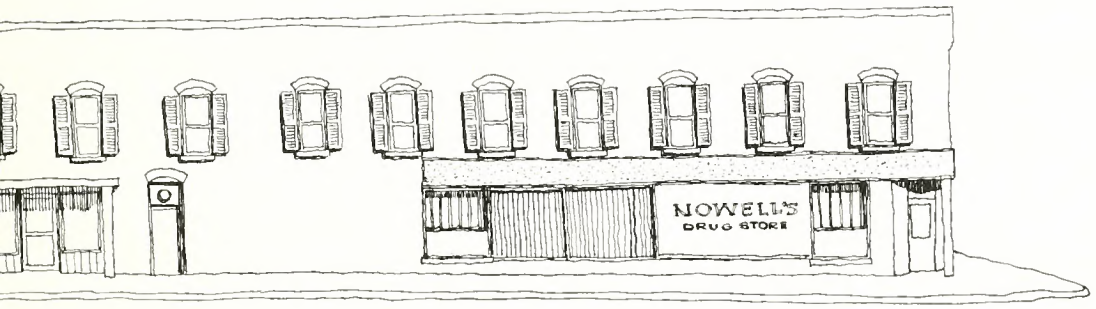




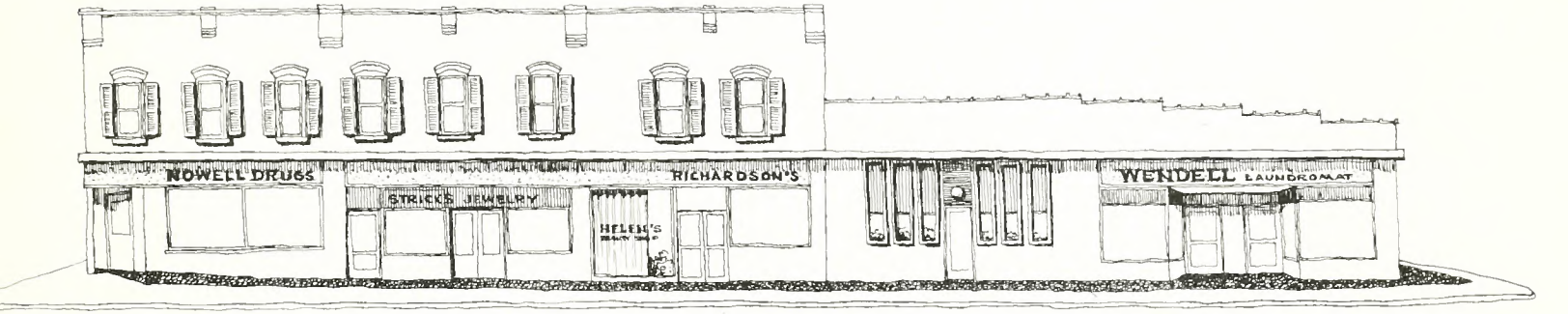



THE BANK OF WENDELL

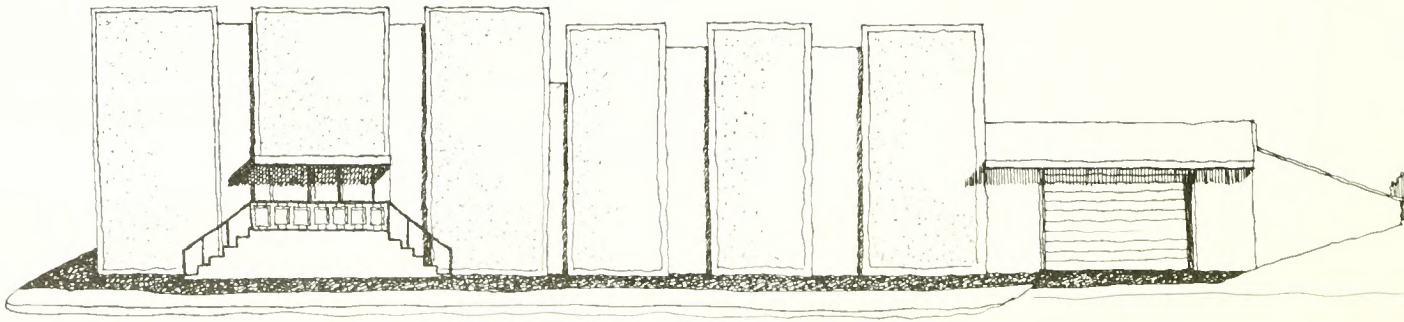
NOWELL'S Rexall STORE
PHOTOGRAPHIC
GARDEN SEED
Coca-Cola
Fountain
Service

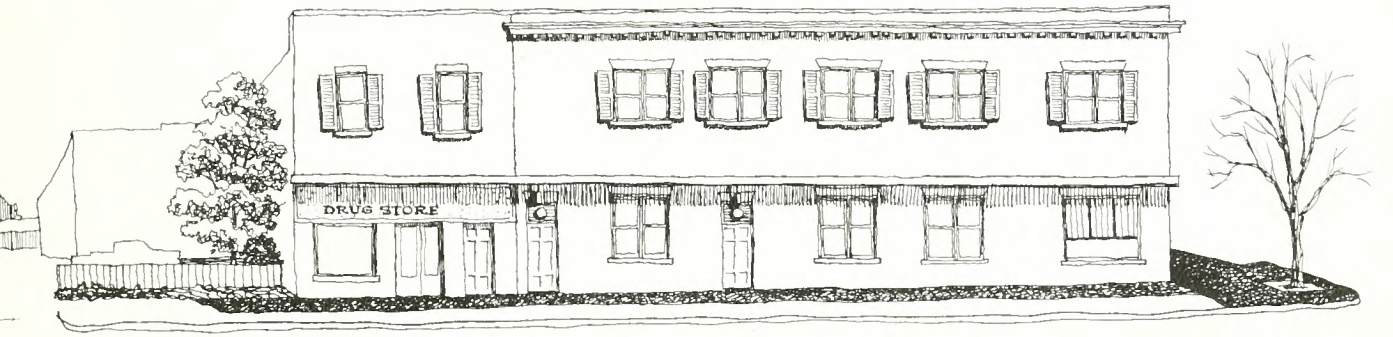

NOWELL'S
DRUG STORE

NOWELL'S DRUG STORE


NOWELL DRUGS
STRICK'S JEWELRY
HELEN'S
RICHARDSON'S
WENDELL LAUNDROMAT

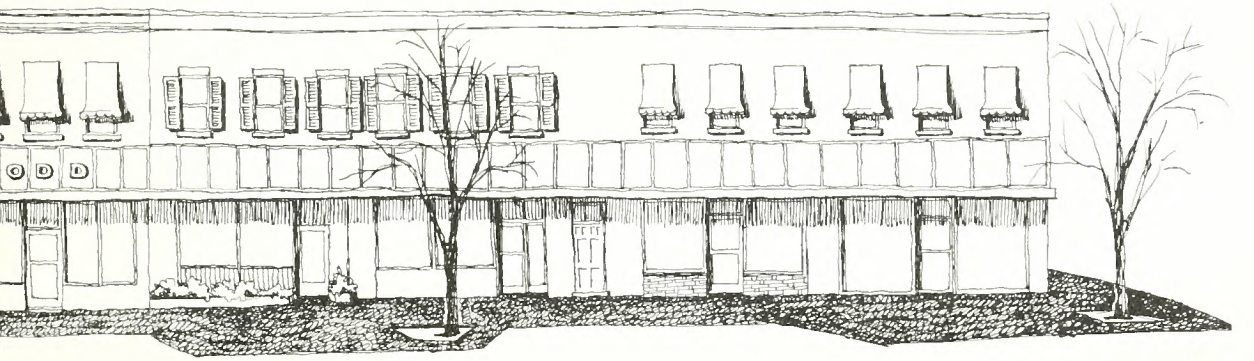
FARMER'S
WAREHOUSE



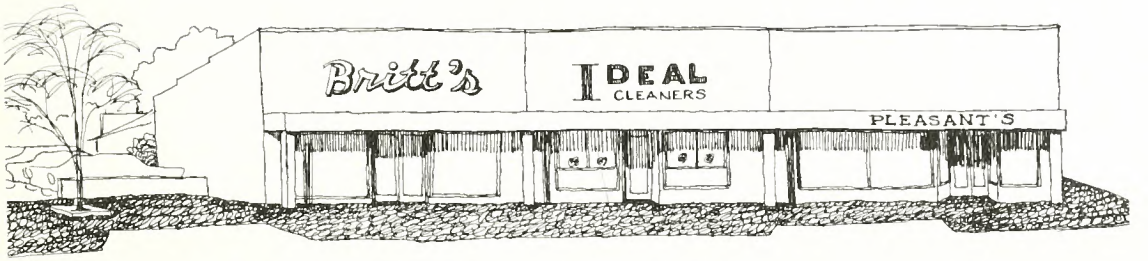

DRUG STORE

WESTERN AUTO

Richardson's
WESTERN AUTO


ODD

Britt's
Penn State
MILK


Britt's
IDEAL
CLEANERS
PLEASANT'S

might only involve cleaning up the rear of the store, simplifying the merchandise in the window, removing the tasteless and conflicting signs and/or sharing in the cost of installing the canopy in front of the store. Conversely, in a few instances, it could require much rehabilitation both interior and exterior. Perhaps, a new store entrance door and glass is needed, painting or cleaning of brick or panels of the dull grey-black facing which looks extremely well with red brick or painted brick in neutral colors and the unified canopy. There may be some extensive repairs necessary for the maintenance of the structural soundness of the building. This must be a matter of private initiative and undertaken by the local merchants and property owners. In nearly all cases, signs will need to be removed from the facades of the stores to coordinate with the canopy system. The backs of the buildings are as important as the fronts when there is parking in the rear.

REAR ENTRANCES

Equally as much thought and effort must go into the improvement of the back sides of the central business district buildings as the fronts. In most situations these ignored facades are in desperate need of cleaning and painting. However, there is a chance to avoid or correct past mistakes by adhering to an organized code of design just as must be done on the front sides of the structures.

SHOPPING MALL

Safe and convenient pedestrian shopping in the primary retail trade district of the central business district can be better achieved through the creation of a pedestrian shopping mall on Main Street from Third Street to Fourth Street. No through vehicular traffic should use this area even at the present time as it is not a collector of north or south vehicles except in the congested downtown area. The mutually adopted major thoroughfare

plan excludes Main Street and recognizes the potential by designating Pine Street and Cypress Street on the east and west to collect and distribute traffic in the downtown core.

The closing of Main Street from Third Street to Fourth Street is physically quite a simple matter. However, it is the related improvements and critical timing that will determine the ultimate success of the project. When the off-street parking areas are provided on the railroad properties and overhead wiring is underground, the construction of the mall should begin as soon as possible. Immediately, the other necessary improvements of paving, landscaping, signing, storefront elevations, canopy system and street furniture must occur to effectuate the total improvement of the new open space for shopping convenience and pedestrian safety while shopping in the central business district. The several alleyways should be retained as well as landscaped and lighted access routes for pedestrian entrance to the newly created environment of shopping. Some store buildings could utilize the rear approach to their businesses to provide several means of entry to the mall.

New parking lots, discussed in the following section, will provide more spaces than those eliminated by the creation of the mall area. In the shopping mall should be an atmosphere of simple design providing the pedestrian customers with points of visual interest and places of relaxation. Trees, plants and grass will provide a natural and pleasing effect in the total environment. A water fountain could be seen as well as heard. The canopy system would give shelter while also being a unifying factor. Paving materials are utilitarian but also give a variety of textures.

PARKING

At the present time there are 181 off-street parking spaces in the core downtown area between Fourth and Second, and Cypress and Pine Streets. Since at the present time there are no municipally owned off-street parking spaces, the continued use of this land for parking depends upon the tolerance of the property owners. They may, at any time, decide to eliminate this "free public" parking and build upon their lots.

There are also a total of 316 on-street parking spaces in the area between Wilson and Second, Pine and Cypress Streets. Even though Wilson Street is but one block from the

beginning of the core retail area, shoppers in a community the size of Wendell would probably be loathe to walk this far to shop.

Modern shopping centers, where stores are clustered together and a common parking area provided for all uses normally allot about 1 parking space for each 75 square feet in commercial use. Since a downtown area contains many uses in addition to primary retail uses, they do not need such a high standard of parking. Wendell's on-street and off-street parking areas, however, provide only 1 parking space for each 239 square feet of business area. And this figure includes the off-street parking associated with churches and industrial-warehouse uses, but does not include an estimate of their own need for parking. It is no wonder that shoppers flock to shopping centers while our downtown areas fail to gain in sales.

Included in the currently available parking spaces are approximately 100 street and off-street spaces in unimproved areas. These areas should be adequately paved and marked to provide the convenience and safety necessary to continue to draw consumers to the central shopping area.

The Planning Board recommends that a conservative standard of 1 parking space for each 200 square feet in primary retail, consumer services and professional and office use be used at this time. This means that 100 additional parking spaces are needed at the present ime for the core downtown area to function most effectively.

Shopping centers also have the advantage of unified design, and landscaping. The CBD plan for Wendell recommends that this aspect of a center be built into the town's CBD. This, however, would eliminate 46 on-street parking spaces. It can also be assumed that a vital CBD will see its principal uses increase in area by about 20% over the next twenty years.. Therefore, the standard of 1 parking space for each 200 square feet in use area plus the 46 spaces that would be eliminated by the mall, means that 264 additional spaces will be needed as the CBD plan is effectuated.

The CBD Plan proposes that the area now used by the railroad station and associated storage buildings be redeveloped for CBD parking. This will provide approximately 50 parking spaces over and above current supply. Other smaller areas scattered around the edge of the CBD could be used to make up the number needed to reach the standard used.

It is important to keep in mind that this parking must be provided within the blocks bounded by Cypress, Pine, Fourth and Second, so that shoppers will not have to cross these CBD loop streets on foot. Thus, a shopper could drive down Cypress to the parking lot where the warehouse now exists, get out of his car, walk into the (improved) back door of a store and through the store to the Main Street mall.

The organization and appearance of these additional parking areas is also of vital importance and is discussed in other sections of this report. With reasonable effort and planning the Wendell business district can effectively compete with more modern shopping centers, and maintain a viable core in the existing location.

LANDSCAPE PLANTING

A tree planting and general landscape program must be carried out in the effectuation of the downtown core and the entire central business district. The few trees that already exist are helpful and should be preserved but many more are needed. Trees should not only be used along all sidewalks but with parking areas to soften the effect of large areas of parking. Trees must be selected to fit the size and scale of the area where they are to be planted.

SIGNS

The design of advertising and directional signs should be an integral part of the physical structures and environment. However, most buildings are planned and constructed

with no regard for the eventual sign which detracts from it. Competition among the merchants and sign painters has led to bigger and brighter ugly signing that normally destroys the purpose for which they were intended. These signs are too abundant and possess no coordination of size, shape, material and/or color. There must be restrictive controls standardizing these important factors for the entire central business district to achieve any desirable improvement in the environment of the downtown shopping area. Type of lettering and the placement of signs are also critical considerations in this vital problem.

STREET FURNITURE

A dedicated concern for the design of the various items of necessity found on the street in the central business district must prevail in the downtown improvement program. Street signs, traffic lights, mail boxes, trash recepticles, light standards, fire hydrants, and benches can and do either detract or improve the visual experience in the downtown shopping core of the central business district. Careful selection, maintenance, and placement must be given to these crucial ingredients in the urban environment. There are several principles to be followed for street furniture to achieve beneficial results. Eliminate those unnecessary items and combine as many related objects as practical, i.e., benches and planters, signs and lights, etc. A simple design and coordinated color for all items should be established and made mandatory. The function of the item should determine the location of its placement but this must be done on a basis considering the relationship of each item to the total scheme.

I M P L E M E N T A T I O N

The paramount aspect of the preliminary plan for the central business district of Wendell is to actually create the concept and build the various aspects of the proposed scheme. Planning and drawing in a report and plan on paper has been the first step. Next must come the actual effectuation of the recommendations. The entire plan cannot be accomplished by any one individual or at one time. The building of the plan for the downtown must use the talents and efforts of many people and be staged by a related time schedule program.

A central business district plan can only be effectuated through mutual agreements on responsibilities of property owners, downtown merchants, civic organizations and town officials. If any one group waits for the others to proceed without contributing in the decision making and financial arrangements, the plan will never be effectuated. A great deal of time and energy can be literally wasted in this process and a partial or nondescript product would certainly be the result. The majority of supporters of the plan must not wait idly refusing to take constructive action due to the lethargic minority who will never participate.

The improvements proposed in the downtown plan can be classified into two groups and a combination of both. There are projects for the town to pursue and several for the property owners and local merchants and some that must rely on all the contributions of each segment.

The Town has the responsibility of the improvement of the thoroughfare system of streets for the circulation of traffic in the downtown area, enforcement of parking regulations, provision of off-street parking lots, moving any street lighting, maintenance of paving and sidewalks, and landscaping plants.

The merchants and owners, individually and collectively, must undertake the physical improvement of the store structures, the interior and exterior appearance of their properties, the construction of the unified canopy system, the removal, designing and installation of a controlled and simple sign program, and devoutly follow the design standards to be determined.

There are several more crucial areas of improvements to totally implement the plan, but there are at least as many interested groups in the community to easily take on the task. The railroad company has agreed with the town to participate by relocating the freight terminal and removing the spur tracks. They will also lease their right-of-way to the town for needed parking. The electric power and telephone companies have offered to put their wiring in the downtown area underground and move the meters to less conspicuous places. These are all phases of the overall plan that must be done and need to take place early as other projects depend on them. It is indeed encouraging to have the complete support of these private utilities when it is the merchant and citizen who will profit and benefit from their interest.

There are remaining the crucial matters of street furniture, sculpture, fountains, trees, plants, grass, sign kiosks to be delegated to a specific group. However, the various civic organizations have expressed a willing interest and could each accept an appropriate share of these important items. The critical aspect is to assign the responsibility of all the recommendations to the most logical individual or group. There must be strict adherence to the plan and its design objectives and standards. Coordination and cooperation must prevail relative to the time phasing and project construction. The leadership of the municipal government should remain as the central clearing house of information throughout the program with the Planning Board advising and coordinating the various groups.

There are also those aspects of the comprehensive design plan for the downtown that cannot be designated to any one group. The responsibility of the pedestrian mall concept on Main Street must be a combined effort. Nevertheless, certain stages and areas must have someone ready to assume responsibility for completion. The town must close the street and resurface the walks and paving. The utility companies can then bury their wiring and remove the poles so the shopping area for pedestrian traffic can be quickly paved and planted with landscape materials. The town could provide the labor for this while merchants or other groups could donate the materials. Private individuals and civic organizations can then supply the necessary sculpture, fountain, kiosk and trees.

A major point to consider in the implementation of the downtown improvement is that the plan presented in this report is a preliminary proposal of design recommendations. It is general in nature and should be augmented by detailed working drawings for the actual construction. The talents and professional abilities of architects should be used for the design of any new buildings and the improvements to existing ones. Landscape architects should be commissioned for the preparation of detailed drawings for the different landscaping materials, plants and trees. However, these professionals must work as a team effort and use this plan as a basic guide. Then the various contractors and builders must be hired to carry out the plan by constructing the improvements.

There is no rational reason that the recommendations proposed within this plan cannot be achieved. However, they can only be accomplished under the conditions that there are sufficient people dedicated to the progress of the community and they will contribute unselfishly over a considerable period of time. This will require cooperation instead of competition and a programmed schedule of project phasing and financial responsibility. Each and every step is vital to the accomplishment and success of the overall long range plan for the improvement of the central business district of the community.

It will be necessary to appoint committees made up of property owners, local merchants, board members, town officials, civic leaders, professional people and interested citizens to insure active participation in the scheduling, promotion, financing, and accomplishment of the projects involved within the whole program.

A non-profit corporation could be organized to promote the development of the plan. They would need to work extremely near to the Town Planning Boards to achieve the goals in effectuating the plan for the improvement of the downtown central business district. The corporation could elect the board of directors from their members and set target dates and assign responsibilities for project completion.

The recommendations for downtown improvements within this study are feasible and within the range of possibility. However, they will be no more than idle dreams unless the civic minded citizens become involved and take the initiative to implement the proposed plan. Governmental officials, downtown businessmen, property owners, interested groups, and individual residents have a responsibility of putting this preliminary design plan into a vital program of action. It will be a task of combined effort, studied cooperation, long range financing and thoughtful compromise to effectuate these ideas so that vision and wisdom ultimately become reality and not merely utopia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the effectuation of the proposed plan and related descriptive text, a more clearly defined set of recommendations is of immeasurable value. This will assist the Planning Board in presenting this long range project plan to the Town Council for adoption by resolution and recording as an official policy statement of intentions regarding the physical, economic, and social welfare of the Town by its elected governing body.

The guidelines for achieving the objectives of vital concern to the community should be widely publicized to promote significant owner participation and an informed public. The following proposal areas are listed in priority of projects schedule but may not necessarily be in an absolute order of their accomplishment.

(A) REMOVE RAILROAD STATION
(B) IMPROVE PARKING AREAS
(C) UNDERGROUND UTILITIES
(D) LANDSCAPED PEDESTRIAN MALL
(E) UNIFIED CANOPY SYSTEM
(F) STORE ELEVATIONS & SIGNS

Obviously there is a degree of overlap in these listed areas of improvements and precise care must be given not to create conflict between the projects and/or time scheduling.

The construction of canopies over the downtown store fronts must be unified. Costs shall be reduced by constructing an entire block or more at one time. The same materials, sizes, and contracting firm should be used. The two recent examples should be continued due to their simple design, conformity of appearance and ease of maintenance features. The contractor should be required to show the owners and board the canopy connection details and use a minimum number of elevation changes required in blocks.

The electrical and telephone utility companies have agreed to proceed in the removal of overhead wiring and poles in the downtown area. This program should be arranged to permit and facilitate the concurrent placement of underground utility wires and new street and sidewalk paving incorporated in the mall.

The centrally located railroad station should be removed as soon as possible. The railroad officials have agreed to participate in this improvement as well as lease

their property to the town. The spur tracks can then be removed and the entire area used for off-street parking. This would provide ample space for shoppers and employees in order to relocate the on-street parking in the pedestrian shopping area.

Off-street parking lot improvements should follow immediately after property is acquired. There will be several areas for this purpose and can be utilized beneficially by lease agreement or actual purchase if required. Condemnation through eminent domain would not be necessary. Improvements would include drainage, paving, painting, landscaping, signs, and possibly meter installation if later determined feasible in the best public interest.

The conversion of Main Street from Third Street to Fourth Street to a mall is physically an uncomplicated matter. However, the success of the entire plan will depend upon its timing and related resulting space for pedestrian shoppers in the mall. Necessary ingredients for the fulfillment of this concept would demand paving material, fairly mature trees, colorful small plants and some substantial wooden benches, as a minimum to begin with. Further refinements should be a fountain and pool, a focal point located kiosk for notices, a directional space frame, perhaps with a clock, strategically placed at the entrance of one end and at the other would be greatly enhanced by a permanent sculpture piece designed by a professional and signifying some of the local culture. These could be donated by a civic organization, garden club, church group, chamber of commerce, or an individual citizen as a symbol of the unity of the town and its progress. Any gifts must conform to the general plan and should be approved by the board responsible for the comprehensive improvement program.

The existing store owners and merchants should combine efforts to improve store front elevations of their facilities. Standards of colors and objectives of design recommended must be followed to convert chaos to order and beauty. At this stage of the program the unified canopy previously hung or supported would tie the facades together,

ugly wires would be hidden underground, pedestrians leisurely shopping amid the landscaped mall and vehicles circulating uncongested around the loop of the downtown core and conveniently parking in one of the several close-by off-street safe lots provided. There is but one more phase to achieve the intended results of the whole development.

After the most demanding work is finished would be the time for renewing existing facades of commercial establishments. Remove existing tasteless and duplication signs replacing these with simple, pleasing, uniform ones with standard sizes as specified. An ambitious campaign of fix-up and clean-up would work in well at this point along with the decorating of backs of stores which adjoin parking and/or circulation. Other vital improvements will become evident and continual maintenance will insure the clean image so important in any shopping district. Cultivating the colorful flowerbeds would be the only major continuing expense once these basic improvements have been made.

Although some of these projects are related to a point that one must be completed before another is begun, chronologically others have no dependency on other needed improvements. Consideration should be given to scheduling and the relationship of construction. Some programs will require extended amounts of time to complete while others can be accomplished almost instantaneously. Several areas of improvement will require substantial sums to finance and others will be relatively inexpensive. Similarly, different projects within the program will rely on varying degrees of civic, public and private sectors of financial support and task effectuation. However, combined effort and completion of all the related aspects of the plan are of the utmost significance if the design is to benefit the town and its people.

The approach is simple and clearly pratical. The Town and the Central Business District will change regardless even if the proposed plan is not followed and implemented. Therefore, it is only logical and common sense to use the organized and planned scheme to achieve order and beauty in the future.

LET US BEGIN NOW!

"Give me the serenity to accept
what cannot be changed
give me the courage to change
what must be changed
the wisdom to distinguish one
from the other"

Reinhold Niebuhr

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